

State NRM Program Case Studies 2008-09

NRM Community Grants Projects

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**Government
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Department of Environment
and Natural Resources

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Introduction

Community and volunteer groups play a vital role in helping manage our natural resources. To recognise this invaluable contribution, NRM Community Grants were created to help community groups carry out local land care, coast care and water care projects.

On 12 June 2009 the then Environment and Conservation Minister Jay Weatherill announced that 73 community groups across South Australia would share in a total of \$631,000 in funding.

The grants supported a range of volunteer and community groups including land, catchment and water care groups; conservation groups; progress associations; farming and agricultural groups; Aboriginal organisations and schools. These local level projects complemented larger scale initiatives delivered by the eight regional NRM boards and state NRM agencies.

These eleven case studies showcase some of the achievements by community groups that received funding across South Australia.

Threat abatement in the Kersbrook Stone Reserve

Community group: Kersbrook Landcare Group Inc.

Funding amount: \$5,000

NRM Region: Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR)

(CG085050B)



This project promoted a healthy habitat and aided regeneration in the Stone Reserve in the Kersbrook region through threat abatement, focusing on bush care weed control techniques, rabbit control and rubbish removal.

The members of the Kersbrook Landcare Group were involved in locating and recording rabbit warrens and destroying the warrens with the support of the DEH Northern Rangers. The rabbit population was much more extensive than first thought, and it will be a high future priority to ensure rabbit populations remain at low densities.

Due to the extent of bulb weed infestation on site, work focused on removing all scattered bulbs from good quality vegetation to create a 'weed front'. Freesia, Garlic, Montpellier broom and *Ornythogalum thyroides* were treated in an attempt to prevent these weeds spreading into areas of intact native vegetation. All known Monadenia and Cape tulip plants were treated in the area surveyed and Flinders Ranges Wattle infestations were also controlled. Group members have additionally removed rubbish from the Stone Reserve.

"The Kersbrook Landcare Group has taken on a 'caretaker' role on this site and recognises the need to continue investing in weed control measures into the future."

Helen Bourne (Chairperson)

Clayton Bay community plant nursery

Community group: Clayton Bay Community Association Inc.

Funding amount: \$8,765

NRM Region: SA Murray-Darling Basin (SAMDB)

(CG085111C)



This project completed the set up of a community nursery for plant production and linked into existing community and environmental projects in Clayton Bay and the local region.

The local plant species being grown are to be used for revegetation of the Clayton Bay foreshore areas, with additional plants being available for low cost purchase by local land care groups and farmers.

The nursery is positioned at the Clayton Bay community hall grounds which is also the site of a developing community garden. This resource encourages social interaction, improved environmental awareness and additional volunteering. An increase in plant and propagation knowledge has also been achieved. The nursery is watered by rainwater.

"The nursery is also used by conservation and land management students as a 'live' classroom and hands-on experience."

Carole Richardson (Chair, Foreshore Committee)

Community bat monitoring along Murray and Marne Rivers

Community group: Mid Murray Local Action Planning Committee Inc.

Funding amount: \$1,500

NRM Region: SA Murray-Darling Basin (SAMDB)

(CG084889B)



This project was aimed at increasing community knowledge and understanding of bat species of the world, in particular the local microbat species along the Marne and Murray Rivers. Three workshops were held in the area which engaged a wide range of local participants including community groups, land managers, wetlands managers, NRM staff and local school students.

Each workshop involved around 20 participants who trapped and recorded the different bat species in their regions, later releasing the caught bats. Some landholders borrowed an Anabat Detector device to record the bats on their properties. Results were then analysed and provided back to the landholders.

From the workshops and the individual recordings, a total of six different bat species were recorded, including:

- Chocolate wattled bat (*Chalinolobus morio*)
- Lesser long-eared bat (*Nyctophilus geoffroyi*)
- Gould's wattled bat (*Chalinolobus gouldii*)
- Large forest bat (*Vespadelus darlingtoni*)
- Southern freetail bat (*Mormopterus planiceps*)
- White-striped freetail bat (*Tadarida australis*)

“Community knowledge and understanding of our local microbat species has increased. Interest in bat monitoring was a result of these workshops”

Aimee Linke (Project Manager)



Gardens for learning, reflecting and sharing culture

Community group: Hampstead Primary School

Funding amount: \$7,150

NRM Region: Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR)

(CG085039B)



This project developed a bush tucker garden in cooperation with local families. The garden showcases indigenous plants and features the Kurna story of *Kondili the Whale*. The project also developed a swale to redirect stormwater flows to the garden.

Children worked on a biodiversity science project to research local provenance plants, and decided what to plant where. The swale has been planted with indigenous grasses and reeds and the area surrounding the swale has been planted with indigenous grasses, sedges and plants to minimise erosion.

Children consulted with Aboriginal families in the community to decide on the Kurna story of *Kondili the Whale* and developed a story trail in the swale and bush tucker garden area. Children have shared their learning about indigenous plants and effective water management with peers and family members.

The grasses have flourished and ducks visit the area. The term 'swale' is now part of the community vocabulary. Children choose to spend time in this new garden area at recess and lunch, and like to talk about the changes. Each child in the class undertaking the biodiversity project had to 'adopt' at least three different plants, learn about them and be able to talk about them. This was a great way to increase student and school knowledge.

"We have a number of visitors to the school and students eagerly take them on a tour, describing the swale's purpose and talking with authority about the surrounding plants."

Angela Falkenberg (Principal)



Gemtree Wetlands watercourse rehabilitation project

Community group: Greening Australia

Funding amount: \$9,620

NRM Region: Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR)

(CG085060A)



Gemtree Wetlands is a ten hectare artificial wetlands site dedicated to native flora and fauna in the heart of McLaren Vale. Extensive work has been undertaken by Gemtree Vineyards and Greening Australia to rehabilitate a watercourse running through the wetlands that was infested with a large amount of rubbish and noxious weeds, particularly olive trees. Undertaking pest control works with a focus on controlling the regrowth of olives trees will contribute to the ongoing development of an educational eco-trail, involvement of local community groups and building upon the existing native trees and shrubs planted on the site to date (approximately 30,000).

This stage of the project focussed on weed control maintenance to assist with the establishment of native plant species. Works included spraying around revegetation to reduce weed competition, slashing annual grasses within revegetation, reducing fuel loads, spraying broadleaf weeds within areas of native grass revegetation, controlling olive trees at the eastern end of the watercourse and collecting seed to assist in future revegetation projects.

This project at the Gemtree Wetlands offered an excellent opportunity to further increase community participation in sustainable environmental practices and provided the community with a diverse range of valuable skills and experience.

“The future vision for the Gemtree Wetlands is to provide an area of biodiversity which is a major haven for native plants, frogs, birds and animals, as well as being a great teaching resource for the community”

Ben Cavuoto (Project Manager)

Malleefowl surveying in the Gawler Ranges

Community group: Conservation Volunteers Australia

Funding amount: \$6,000

NRM Region: SA Arid Lands (SAAL) NRM Region

(CG085082B)



Conservation Volunteers Australia in partnership with the former Department for Environment and Heritage and EcoKnowledge conducted a survey in October 2009 of Malleefowl in the Gawler Ranges National Park (NP).

Malleefowl are a priority species for biodiversity conservation in the Gawler Ranges NP, with national and state conservation ratings. Due to their patchy distribution and relatively low numbers, it is difficult to monitor population trends and determine whether they are responding to management actions such as fox baiting and feral goat programs.

The Malleefowl survey was conducted over nine days and was aimed at increasing knowledge of the species distribution and occurrence of the Malleefowl in the Gawler Ranges NP and to build upon existing baseline data.

Through this survey, 22 new Malleefowl mounds (nests) were identified, which adds to 65 already known in the area. All mounds were permanently marked, photographed and GPS locations recorded to assist with future monitoring.

Also recorded was the size of the mounds and surrounding activity, including the presence of eggshells, tracks and scats of animals. This data was entered onto the Biological Databases of SA and will provide important information for the future management of Malleefowl in the Gawler Ranges.

“Community volunteers gained new skills in wildlife monitoring and an increased understanding of the ecology of Malleefowl and threatening processes affecting their conservation.”

Colin Jackson (Chief Executive Officer)



Minda Dunes biodiversity conservation project

Community group: Holdfast Bay Dune Care Team

Funding amount: \$4,065

NRM Region: Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR)
(CG085025B)



The Minda dunes, as one of three remaining remnant sand dunes along the coastline of metropolitan Adelaide, are impacted by many threats. To reduce such threats, this project stabilised a remnant foredune ecosystem through integrated restoration methods.

Areas of the foredune have been stabilised using jute matting and sensitive areas have been protected through the use of sand drift fencing. Sand accumulation has already occurred and is facilitating sand dune development and protection. In total, over 500 seedlings (colonising plants) were planted and are doing very well. Three Boobook boxes have been installed which will provide suitable nesting areas for breeding pairs of birds.

Sand drift fencing, jute matting, use of coir logs, species selection and placement formed the basis of the project. The project assists coastal managers in understanding the impacts of using different methodologies to address foredune erosion. There have already been changes in environmental condition and it is clearly evident that the rate of natural regeneration is higher than initially thought.

“Volunteers are more equipped with knowledge regarding sensitive dune care and are more aware about the potential of natural regeneration.”

Russell Glenn (Team Leader)

Poornamookinnie Creek invasive species control project

Community group: Cleve Golf Club

Funding amount: \$6,480

NRM Region: Eyre Peninsula (EP)

(CG084985B)



This project promoted natural revegetation of native trees and shrubs along sections of the Poornamookinnie Creek waterway by implementing invasive pest species management techniques to prevent their spread into neighbouring pastures and native vegetation.

Approximately 1.5 ha of Fountain grass, 35 individual Prickly pear and other *Opuntia* plants were treated along the creek. Six areas with rabbit activity were managed through poisoning and warren fumigation work. Four hectares were revegetated using native species comprising 500 tubestock and 7 kms direct seeding.

Changes to the condition of the environment will be evident over time as native grasses and acacia shrubs will be able to regenerate in the areas previously occupied by the fountain grass and some areas densely populated with *Opuntia* plants.

The Golf Club volunteers have a better understanding of the importance of controlling the targeted invasive species (particularly Prickly pear and *Opuntia*), which will allow for continued long term public access to this area. Controlling fountain grass reduces the likelihood of it spreading onto neighbouring properties, in this case a downstream revegetation project.

“Removing the fountain grass from this environment has also reduced a potential fire hazard close to the Cleve township.”

Troy Richardson (President)



Potters Paddock (Stage 4)

Community group: Clarendon Primary School

Funding amount: \$3,400

NRM Region: Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR)

(CG085059B)



Clarendon Primary School has been actively involved through planting and weed control with the rehabilitation of Potters Paddock, adjacent to the school.

This stage of the project involved in-fill planting with native grasses, ground cover and small local shrubs. Also, infestations of African Weed Orchid, Cape tulip, small patches of Blackberry and Pine saplings have been controlled.

In addition to the involvement of students and their parents, the Kangarilla Landcare group has assisted with seedling supply and SA Water have been very supportive of the project. The project provides linkages in the Mt Bold to Onkaparinga biodiversity corridor.

“The best thing about the project is the involvement of the kids over the years. A number of students that have left the school still come back to help out with weed control and planting.”

Rob Dibble (Revegetation Coordinator)



Revegetation of campgrounds following bushfires

Community group: Friends of Parks Inc. – Kangaroo Island Western District

Funding amount: \$4,370

NRM Region: Kangaroo Island (KI)

(CG084940B)



Friends of Parks Inc. - Kangaroo Island Western District contributed to the recovery of native vegetation in Flinders Chase National Park (NP) following the December 2007 bushfires. In collaboration with park staff, volunteers undertook revegetation around public campgrounds in the park.

Approximately 600 native seedlings of local provenance were planted around the Rocky River campground in Flinders Chase NP during winter 2009. A further 400 were planted during February 2010. Survival of the first plantings was exceptionally good (>90%).

Large numbers of seeds of native plants suitable for use as screening around campsites were collected from unburnt pockets of vegetation in Flinders Chase NP. More than 1,000 seedlings have been germinated in seedling tubes for planting out around the West Bay and Snake Lagoon campgrounds in early winter 2010.

Most of the campgrounds in Flinders Chase NP were destroyed in the 2007 bushfires. The fires were followed by dense regrowth of Prickly acacia - not a particularly suitable plant for a campground. The project has hastened the growth of a greater diversity of more suitable local screening plants for the campgrounds. The Friends of Parks group and the park rangers have gained greater experience in revegetation of natural environments.

“The result will be a better environment for recovering populations of wildlife and a more pleasant camping experience for visitors to the national park.”

Colin Wilson (President)

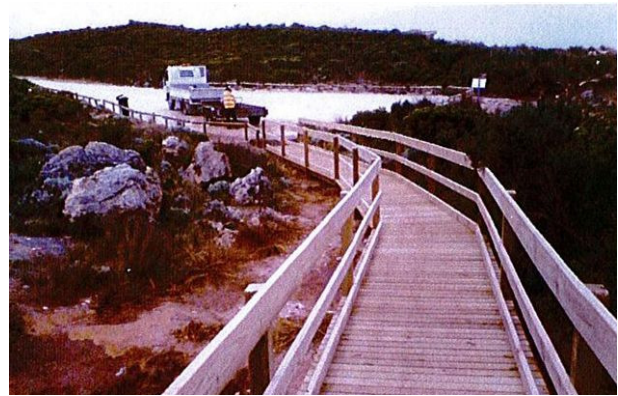
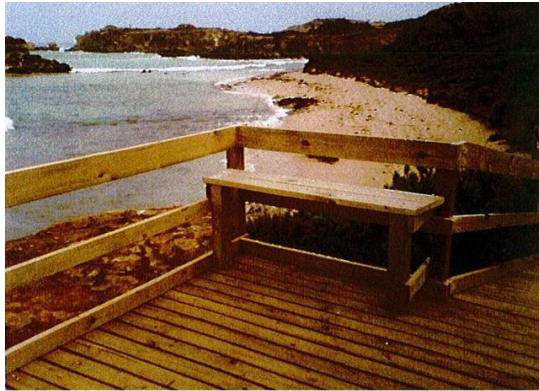
Shelley Beach boardwalk extension

Community group: Port MacDonnell Landcare Group Inc.

Funding amount: \$4,300

NRM Region: South East (SE)

(CG084936A)



The Port MacDonnell Landcare Group in conjunction with the local council addressed damage to the dune ecosystem at Shelley Beach. This was done through the installation of a boardwalk, control of invasive weeds and the planting of 500 endemic plants.

Changes to the environment will become more evident over time, as protection works for the coastal environment have been undertaken to support the long term sustainability of the area.

Visitors and the community can now access Shelley Beach without impacting negatively on the surrounding vulnerable environs. Community involvement in the project has resulted in increased knowledge of construction works that can be applied for the protection of other areas.

“Promotion of the boardwalk will raise awareness and understanding of the vulnerability and protection measures taken to maintain our coastal areas.”

Peter Feast (Chairman)